

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

The present volume therefore includes a chapter supplied by the International Labour Office on the moral protection of the young women workers, and chapters on physical and psychological causes of prostitution and on the reduction of demand, contributed respectively by Dr. Tage Kemp, Director of the University Institute for Human Genetics, Copenhagen, and Dr. J. A. Cavaillon, Technical Inspector-General of the French Ministry of Health.

The detailed studies contained in this volume are preceded by a general introduction, which describes the changes in prostitution since the beginning of the century and gives a summary of its causes and of preventive measures.

Another chapter, on the protection of young girls and women against immediate causes of prostitution, deals with influences and circumstances not directly connected with the state of employment. The part played by women police in preventing prostitution, which is prominently in the foreground in this country at the present time, and the dangers facing the young unmarried mother are fully discussed. The work of railway station missions, in particular that of the International Federation of Friends of Young Women, receives full annotation.

The Advisory Committee devoted special consideration to the part played by social services in connection with the treatment and cure of venereal disease. It points out the beneficial part these services can play in the rehabilitation of prostitutes by intervening at a moment when such women are likely to be most amenable to outside influence and disinterested advice. Experience shows that in many cases the women concerned have contracted venereal disease before they have actually become prostitutes. Social services can therefore make a definite contribution towards the prevention of prostitution by putting such women in touch with voluntary organizations, and by advising them of the official and non-official help available to them during treatment and after they are cured. The extension of such services is strongly recommended as a means of preventing women from falling into prostitution.

The final chapter, embodying the conclusions and recommendations, is followed by two "Annexes", one being a paper by Dr. Tage Kemp on the treatment of prostitutes, whilst the other, drawn up by the International Labour Office, provides information concerning facilities which existed when the war broke out for recreation for young women workers during their holidays.

As regards the venereal diseases, the Report considers that public enlightenment was and still is hampered by the moral stigma attached to these conditions, although it is thought that this prejudice is now lessening. It is pointed out that the dangers of ignorance are threefold: namely, that the patient will not recognize the disease; that recognizing it he will dismiss it as unimportant; that he will conceal it through shame or because he is unaware of the facilities for treatment. Many countries are making efforts to contend with these dangers, and it is considered that the decreased demand for professional prostitutes is partly due to a wider knowledge and a more general fear of the consequences of venereal disease.

The Advisory Committee, when referring to recent additions to medical treatment such as the sulphonamides, feels that such developments are of great importance also as regards the social aspects of venereal disease. Their information from various quarters indicates that the spread of knowledge of the effectiveness of these medicaments has given rise to a belief that there is less risk of contracting gonorrhoea and that, even if it is contracted, a cure can be effected with comparative ease. This has led among certain groups of young men to the removal of the fear of infection which is one of the most powerful deterrents to the visiting of prostitutes.

This excellent survey of the whole question of the prevention of prostitution is well summed up in the following terms:

"Attempts have been made to lessen both the demand for prostitutes and the supply of prostitutes, and these attempts could be extended. The law and the police, backed by public opinion, can hamper the prostitute's exploiters, can prevent them from recruiting women by force or fraud and from artificially expanding demand by advertisement and suggestion. Education and the protection of the worker and the development of health and social services can weaken some of the primary causes of both demand and supply. Whether they can ever eliminate them entirely is uncertain, for prostitution is deeply ingrained in urban civilised life and has outlived many attempts to uproot it. However, repressive measures have shown themselves of little avail. If prostitution is ever to be reduced deliberately, it can be only through intelligent and persistent attempts to counteract the causes which lead up to it."

V. E. L.

V. D. education in the factory

One day in each Health Week in a group of engineering works has been devoted to the subject of venereal disease. The group medical officer gave a talk which introduced the display of a film and advised every employee to visit the exhibition lent by the Ministry of Health, to which men and women were admitted separately. When the men were present the medical officer answered questions and when the women were admitted his place was taken by a nurse. Leaflets were distributed and questions encouraged. In all more than 80 per cent of the number of employees made use of the opportunity. Approval of the way in which the subject was handled was widespread.—*British Journal of Physical Medicine and Industrial Hygiene*, November-December 1944.